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Gendered Harm and Structural Violence in the British Asylum System

Book

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'This book is an important reading to anyone who wants to understand the reality of the contours of asylum, gender and state power in the UK and beyond from the situated gazes of women asylum seekers. The book shows, from different angles, how the structural violence and oppression inherent in British asylum and everyday bordering policies and practices tend to often add to, rather than heal, traumas these women have undergone before and during their migration processes in their struggles for survival.'

Nira Yuval-Davis, *Professor, Director of the Research Centre on Migration, Refugees and Belonging (CMRB), University of East London, UK*

'Meticulously documenting state crime, harm and violence targeted against women seeking asylum, Canning skillfully deploys her academic-activist feminist standpoint to explode the myth of the refugee 'crisis'. At the same time, she insists that the silence which is integral to state power can be and is being challenged through collective social action: Gendered Harm and Structural Violence in the British Asylum System is part of that resistance movement.'

Steve Tombs, *Professor, Head of Social Policy & Criminology at the Open University and Co-Director of the International Centre for Comparative Criminological Research, UK*

'In this book, Canning provides a thoughtful, contextually grounded and meticulous critique of the British asylum system that is searing in its potency. Canning reminds us that Britain's asylum systems and structures compound trauma, produce harm and perpetrate violence on those who arrive seeking humanitarian protection. A decade of research and advocacy has contributed to this book and the considered analysis offers immense value to researchers, advocates and practitioners.'

Alison Gerard, *Associate Professor in Law and Director of the Centre for Law and Justice, Charles Sturt University, Australia*

'This is a must read for anyone who wants to gain understanding of the structural harms and violence inflicted on people seeking asylum by the British state and its corporate allies. In this book, Canning has conducted an excellent feminist analysis of torture and harm, and given voice to the voiceless, drawing narratives of survival and resistance. This is a necessary and much needed contribution to critical criminology and feminism.'

Dr Monish Bhatia, *Lecturer in Criminology, Abertay University, UK*

'In this beautifully written yet powerful and moving account of women's experiences as they seek protection from persecution, violence and human rights abuse, Victoria Canning paints a complex picture that challenges the assumption that conditions for those seeking asylum in the UK are better than in other countries of Europe. In weaving the accounts of women through the book, she illustrates the structural gender violence that permeates the system but also stories of survival and resistance that challenge the representation of women asylum seekers as vulnerable and dependent. A must read!'

Heaven Crawley, *Professor, Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University, UK and author of Refugees and Gender: Law and Process*

Britain is often heralded as a country in which the rights and welfare of survivors of conflict and persecution are well embedded, and where the standard of living conditions for those seeking asylum is relatively high. Drawing on a decade of activism and research in the North West of England, this book contends that, on the contrary, conditions are often structurally violent. For survivors of gendered violence, harm inflicted throughout the process of seeking asylum can be intersectional and compound the impacts of previous experiences of violent continuums. The everyday threat of detention and deportation; poor housing and inadequate welfare access; and systemic cuts to domestic and sexual violence support all contribute to a temporal limbo which limits women's personal autonomy and access to basic human rights.

By reflecting on evidence from interviews, focus groups, activist participation and oral history, Gendered Harm and Structural Violence provides a unique insight into the everyday impacts of policy and practice that arguably result in the infliction of further gendered harms on survivors of violence and persecution.

Of interest to students and scholars of criminology, zemiology, sociology, human rights, migration policy, state violence and gender, this book develops on and adds to the expanding literatures around immigration, crimmigration and asylum.

Victoria Canning is a Lecturer in Criminology at The Open University, UK. For the past decade she has been involved in feminist and asylum rights campaigns in the North West of England. She is co-ordinator of the Prisons, Punishment and Detention Working Group with the European Group for the Study of Deviance and Social Control and, among other affiliations, is an activist with Merseyside Women's Movement.

Criminology/Sociology/Human Rights
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